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Self-Presentation

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> When an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey.
> —GOFFMAN (1959, p. 4)

> You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
> Never let them see you sweat.
> —MEDIA ADVICE

Impression management is the goal-directed activity of controlling information in order to influence the impressions formed by an audience. Through impression management, people try to shape an audience's impressions of a person (e.g., self, friends, enemies), a group (e.g., a club, a business organization), an object (e.g., a gift, a car), an event (e.g., a transgression, a task performance), or an idea (e.g., prolife versus prochoice policies, capitalism versus socialism). When people try to control impressions of themselves, as opposed to other people or entities, the activity is called *self-presentation*. The study of self-presentation involves examining (1) how people, as agents, try to shape the attitudes and behaviors of audiences through the presentation of self-relevant information and (2) how people, as targets, respond to the self-presentation activities of others.

Research on self-presentation has exploded in the past 25 years. Twenty-five years ago, the term "self-presentation" could not be found in the index of social psychology texts. Today, self-presentation has emerged as an important topic in social psychology, as well as in counseling and clinical psychology (Friedlander & Schwartz, 1985; Kelly, 2000; Schuetz, Richter, Koehler, & Schiepek, 1997), developmental psychology (Aloise-Young, 1993; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990a, 1990b; Emler & Reicher, 1995; Hatch, 1987), sports psychology (B. James & Collins, 1997; Leary, 1992), organizational behavior and management (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995), marketing (Wooten & Reed, 2000), and political science (McGraw, 1991). In sociology, self-presentation has a venerable history (e.g., Brissett & Edgley, 1990), after being popularized by Erving Goffman (1959) in his classic, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Given the sheer volume of research on the topic, no single chapter can

hope to cover it all. Instead, I explore some of the major themes and directions that have generated much of the research.

Gamesmanship and Authenticity

Self-presentation evokes images of gamesmanship, with people jockeying for position in the social world by trying to convey a particular image of self to others. Examples that come readily to mind are the politician whose appearance, mannerisms, and opinions conform to what each constituency prefers; the salesperson who smiles warmly and flatters a customer to make the sale; the social chameleon who tries to impress others by wearing the latest designer outfits and shows the world a face and body that have been improved by the marvels of cosmetic surgery; or nearly anyone who has an important date or job interview and describes personal information in ways that might impress the other person. These examples illustrate a meaningful class of social behavior, in which people are concerned about how they appear to others and regulate their behavior in order to create a preferred impression. Whether the objective is to gain friends, increase psychological and material well-being, or secure a preferred public identity, self-presentation can be used to accomplish interpersonal goals that can be realized only by influencing the responses of others to oneself.

This view of self-presentation tells only part of the story, however. Self-presentation is not just superficial, deceptive, or manipulative activity. It can also involve attempts to convey to audiences an "accurate" portrait of oneself (Baumeister, 1982; Cheek & Hogan, 1983; Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 1980, 1985; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Usually, this portrait reflects a slightly polished and glorified conception of self, but one that is genuinely believed by the actor to be true (J. D. Brown, 1998; Greenwald & Breckler, 1985). The objective may be to ensure that others view one appropriately (i.e., in ways that secure the desired regard and treatment associated with one's identity), to receive validating feedback that might minimize personal doubts about what one is really like, or even to follow the principle that "honesty is the best policy" and thereby feel

authentic while minimizing the hazards of deceit. Furthermore, it appears to take as much self-presentation skill to communicate an accurate, "truthful" impression of self as it does to convey a false one. People with better acting skills, for instance, show smaller discrepancies between their own self-ratings and their friends' ratings of them (Cheek, 1982). People with poor self-presentation skills, who are subpar in expressive ability and the empathic tendency to gauge the reactions of others, are ineffective at convincing others of what they are feeling even when they are telling the truth (De-Paulo, 1992). Thus self-presentation can be guided by truthful motives, as well as duplicitous ones, and valid information must be presented with as much self-presentation skill as invalid information if it is to have the desired impact on the audience.

An analogy is the conduct of an award-winning college lecturer. This lecturer considers the ability and experience of the audience, makes sure that the take-home messages are salient, the organization flows, the examples are relevant and memorable, the facts are correct, and the presentation is delivered in an enthusiastic, attention-capturing fashion. Compare this to the bad lecturer who seems oblivious to the students' capabilities, ignores nonverbal feedback during the lecture, never seems to get to the point, "dumps" information in a disorganized fashion as it comes to mind, makes frequent factual errors because of the failure to refresh memory on the details beforehand, and drones on as the audience's attention shifts to more pleasing pursuits. The former is packaging information in order to create a desired impact on the audience. Yet, just because it is "packaged," this superior performance would not be considered more superficial, inauthentic, deceptive, or self-centered than that of the bad lecturer. Indeed, the attention to the audience and careful packaging increase the likelihood that the good teacher's goal—communicating truthful, meaningful information to the class—will be accomplished. In contrast, spontaneity and expressiveness often involve nothing more than self-centeredness and a lack of concern for others. Thus, although self-presentation involves the packaging of information in order to accomplish goals, the goals can include conveying an

authentic portrayal of self (as perceived by the actor at the time), not just a deceptive one (see Schlenker & Pontari, 2000).

Self-presentation thus includes a range of activities that are united by the central idea that social behavior is a performance that symbolically communicates information about self to others. The real or anticipated reactions of others to this information influences the timing, form, and content of self-presentational activity. Symbolic interactionists such as Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902) were among the first to emphasize that actions carry symbolic meanings that influence the responses of others to self. Goffman (1959) elaborated the theme when he described social life as a series of performances in which people project their identities or "faces" to others and engage in mutual activities that are governed by social rules and rituals. Goffman's dramaturgical approach provided an intricately detailed exposition of the Shakespearean theme that "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

Self-presentation is distinguished from other behaviors because of the importance of these real or anticipated reactions in influencing the communication of information about the self. Self-presentations have their own interpersonal ends and effects and are not purely expressive of feelings or descriptive of facts and beliefs about the self. Children as young as six years of age are able to identify the interpersonal functions of self-presentations (e.g., they can indicate that ingratiating actions are designed to obtain approval) and appreciate that such actions are not just descriptions of private feelings and psychological states (Banerjee & Yuill, 1999; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990a, 1990b).

Self-presentation is sometimes characterized as having additional features, including behavior that is self-conscious, pretentious, and formal (Buss & Briggs, 1984) or that is guided by power-augmenting motives (Jones & Pittman, 1982) or by the audience's values and beliefs rather than the actor's own (Carver & Scheier, 1985; Snyder, 1987). These characterizations reflect attempts to distinguish between what might be called self-expression—which is authentic and spontaneous and originates from within the actor—from self-presentation—which is in-authentic, labored, and influenced by social pressures outside the actor. Although there are differences between these categories, they seem to distinguish between types of self-presentations, not between situations in which self-presentation does or does not occur. Researchers have expanded the range of social behaviors that seem to have self-presentational properties and the range of situations in which self-presentation occurs (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). In my view, self-presentation is guided by a variety of motives, not just power; it occurs among friends, even in familiar situations; it occurs even in long-standing relationships such as marriage; and it does not necessarily involve conscious attention and control.

Automatic and Controlled Processes in Self-Presentation

Like most social behaviors, self-presentation can vary in the extent to which it involves automatic versus controlled cognitive processes. Automatic processes are characterized as ones that (1) occur outside of *conscious awareness,* in that the actor is unaware of the initiation, flow, or impact of the activity; (2) involve relatively little *cognitive effort,* in that the actor does not expend valuable and limited cognitive resources on the activity; (3) are *autonomous,* in that the activities do not have to be consciously monitored once initiated; and (4) are *involuntary,* in that the activities are initiated by certain cues or prompts in the situation (Bargh, 1989, 1996). These components are somewhat independent, so any particular behavior may include only some of them. Automatic processes also can be intentional (Bargh, 1989). Bargh (1989) suggested that most well-learned social scripts and social action sequences are guided by intended, goal-dependent automaticity. In fact, self-presentational activities that involve familiar others, well-learned scripts, and overlearned behavior patterns seem to be examples of intended, goal-dependent automaticity.

Acting Naturally

In everyday life, self-presentations are frequently automatic in nature. They reflect

modulated units of action that eventually "settle in" to become habits. At one time, some of these behaviors may have been arduously practiced, as in the case of the child who practices different facial expressions and gestures in front of a mirror until perfecting favorites. Other behaviors become routine because they are so frequently rewarded, as when people smile, listen attentively, and nod, and then receive approval and friendship in return. Schlenker (1980, 1985; Schlenker, Britt, & Pennington, 1996) suggested that such patterns form self-presentation scripts that guide action, often unthinkingly, in relevant situations. These self-scripts are embedded in larger cognitive scripts (Abelson, 1976) that help people negotiate social situations.

Self-presentation scripts can be cued automatically by specific features of the audience and situation, and actors are often unaware of the extent to which such behavior is influenced by the social context and their own interpersonal goals (Jones, 1990; Schlenker, 1980, 1985; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). An interesting example is the chameleon effect, which refers to nonconscious mimicry of interaction partners' mannerisms and expressions (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). The chameleon effect occurs automatically, is exhibited more by people who are high in empathy, and increases liking between the interaction partners. Research also shows that people will match the self-presentations of others, becoming more positive when interacting with egotistical others and more modest when interacting with self-deprecating others, and that these shifts occur without apparent awareness of the contingencies (Baumeister, Hutton, & Tice, 1989; Jones, Rhodewalt, Berglas, & Skelton, 1981). People tend to underestimate the extent to which their own self-presentations both are influenced by the other and will influence the other (Baumeister et al., 1989).

In general, automatic processes are more likely to occur in routine, frequently encountered situations in which there is low motivation to switch to more effortful processing or in which there is information overload or time pressure that interferes with more effortful processing (Bargh, 1996). In the realm of self-presentation, automaticity seems most likely to prevail when actors are in routine, unstructured situations in which tasks are relatively trivial or unimportant and in which they are with people they know well and in whose positive regard they feel secure. Relaxing at home among friends is a prototypic case. Indeed, college students report thinking less about how others are perceiving or evaluating them and being less nervous when they interact with familiar, same-sex friends, as compared with interacting with unfamiliar individuals or even familiar members of the opposite sex (Leary, Nezlek, et al., 1994). In such comfortable situations, automaticity of self-presentation prevails, unless or until something happens that threatens the actors' image.

In the mind of an actor in automatic mode, there is no self-conscious attempt to control the impression made on others. Yet the goal-directed activity of constructing and protecting a desired identity takes place. To illustrate the point, Schlenker and his colleagues (Schlenker et al., 1996; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000) used the analogy of computer programs running in either visible or minimized windows on a screen. Programs the operator wants to monitor closely because of their importance are left open and visible on the screen. In contrast, other programs can be minimized and run in the background, because they are more familiar and no problems are anticipated during operation. The programs running in the background still have a specific goal and are actively working toward goal accomplishment, but they are not salient to the operator as they run. Only if problems arise, such as when program checking for viruses detects an intruder, does an alarm go off and the program again become salient to the operator.

Even when people interact in comfortable settings with familiar friends, a desired self-presentation script—or self-program—contains instructions about important features of self that are relevant and how they are symbolically communicated through actions. If events threaten the identity that actors want to portray, the discrepancy between the events and their script triggers the alarm—analogous to the intruding virus being detected on the system—and actors focus their attention on image repair. The idea that a self-presentation script is operating

automatically helps to explain why people "stay in character" during social interactions and why they become upset if audiences, even friends, seem to "get the wrong impression." If feedback indicates that an undesired impression has been created, controlled processes are activated, and people take corrective action to restore the desired impression.

Self-presentation is also likely to involve controlled processes when the situation or audience is significant or the actor is uncertain about the type of impression that might be created (Schlenker et al., 1996; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Under these conditions, people are likely to focus, often self-consciously, on the impression they might make and to plan and rehearse their performances. An important date, a job interview, and a business presentation are occasions on which making a good impression is important, but the outcome is not assured. These are the times at which people are most likely to report being self-conscious, "on stage," and concerned about the evaluations of others.

Investigating Automatic and Controlled Self-Presentation

People's cognitive resources are limited and it is difficult to deal with more than one cognitively demanding task at a time (Bargh, 1996). This limited cognitive capacity provides researchers with an opportunity to investigate empirically the differences between automatic and controlled self-presentations. If a process is automatic, introducing a second, cognitively demanding task should produce relatively little disruption of ongoing activities. However, if a process is controlled, introducing a second demanding task should disrupt ongoing activities.

Automatic Egotism

Paulhus and his colleagues (Paulhus, 1988, 1993; Paulhus, Graf, & van Selst, 1989; Paulhus & Levitt, 1987) manipulated cognitive load and found that people's self-descriptions became more positive and socially desirable when they occurred automatically. For instance, Paulhus and colleagues (1989) asked participants to describe themselves by responding "me" or "not me" to positive and negative trait adjectives (e.g., "cheerful," "defensive") that appeared on a computer screen. Participants described themselves more positively if they were given a second, effortful task to perform (monitoring numbers on the screen) than if they could simply focus on their self-descriptions.

Paulhus (1988) proposed that the default mode for self-descriptions is highly positive. This favorable judgment is tempered primarily when people have the cognitive resources to perform a more thorough search through memory for relevant information and then find less positive data. It might also be the case that cognitive resources permit people to consider more fully how their actions will appear to others; they then temper their self-descriptions to seem humble and avoid the appearance of being a braggart. People's descriptions of their successes are more self-glorifying when done privately than publicly (Baumeister & Ilko, 1995), which suggests that people prefer to avoid the public appearance of egotism.

Paulhus (1988) also suggested that if people are highly motivated to make a positive impression, as during a job interview in which it is important to appear competent and to stand out from others, they might be even more self-glorifying than they are when responding automatically. They thus risk seeming egotistical, because humility might be misinterpreted as incompetence (Schlenker & Leary, 1982a). Public self-presentations, on the one hand, thereby offer possible opportunities to impress others, but on the other hand, they pose a risk of appearing egotistical or even being discredited if the audience knows of publicly available, contradictory information. These competing pressures explain why public performances sometimes produce more, sometimes less, and sometimes about the same levels of self-glorification as private responding (see Schlenker & Weigold, 1992).

Automaticity and Audiences

Different self-presentation strategies are associated with different types of audiences. People generally are more self-enhancing with strangers and more modest with friends (Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995). Tice and colleagues (1995) suggested

that with strangers, self-enhancement is the more automatic style; it routinely occurs to impress others who may have no other independent knowledge of the actor. With friends, modesty is the more automatic style, because people are relatively secure in their friends' regard and need not brag. Tice and colleagues reasoned that if people are induced to present themselves in a way that differs from the automatic style, it will require greater cognitive effort and interfere with the capacity to accomplish other cognitive tasks, such as remembering information about the interaction.

As hypothesized, Tice and colleagues (1995) found that participants who interacted with strangers remembered less about their interaction if they had been instructed to present themselves modestly rather than self-enhancingly (Baumeister et al., 1989, found similar results). Also as hypothesized, participants who interacted with friends remembered less if they had been instructed to be self-enhancing rather than modest. Certain self-presentation scripts thus seem to be more appropriate and automatic with some audiences than with others. If the self-presentation and social context match, self-presentation seems effortless and undemanding. If they do not match, cognitive resources are consumed.

Automaticity and Personality

Self-presentation also should be more automatic when it involves qualities that are consistent with existing self-images and personality characteristics. If people are induced to present themselves in out-of-character ways, as when they are tempted to misrepresent themselves to impress an audience, the behavior should require greater cognitive resources and be more likely to be disrupted by a second demanding cognitive task. To test these ideas, Pontari and Schlenker (2000) preselected highly extraverted or highly introverted participants and induced them to play an extraverted or introverted role during an interview. Half of the participants were asked to rehearse an 8-digit number during the interview, supposedly simulating situations in which people had to keep extra information, such as addresses or phone numbers, in mind during interviews.

As hypothesized, Pontari and Schlenker (2000) found that participants who played the familiar role were unaffected by the extra cognitive load. Extraverts who played extraverts and introverts who played introverts created the impression they desired on the interviewer and did it equally well regardless of cognitive load. In contrast, participants who played the unfamiliar role were significantly affected by cognitive load. Extraverts were less effective in playing the introverted role when they were cognitively busy, as the interviewer perceived the busy extraverts as less introverted than the nonbusy ones. This finding supports the idea that controlled performances, such as unfamiliar self-presentations, are disrupted by the addition of a demanding cognitive task.

However, introverts did just the reverse of what the cognitive busyness literature suggests should happen. Introverts who played the extraverted role actually were more effective in getting the interviewer to see them as extraverted if they were cognitively busy than not. Pontari and Schlenker (2000) thought that effect may have been due to the fact that their highly introverted participants also scored high in social anxiety. Prior research shows that socially anxious people actually perform better when they are distracted. Distracting tasks lower arousal level by directing attention toward the distraction and away from disruptive feelings of anxiety (Carver & Scheier, 1982) and provide an excuse for poor social performance (Brodt & Zimbardo, 1981; Leary, 1986). Rehearsing the number may have been just the sort of distracting task that could benefit socially anxious people in challenging social situations. In a second study, Pontari and Schlenker confirmed that highly introverted people are benefited by distracting tasks because such tasks reduce their public self-consciousness and negative ruminations about themselves.

These findings support the idea that self-presentations can reflect either automatic or controlled processes, depending on the familiarity of the self-presentation in the particular social context. When confronting challenging self-presentation situations, the availability of cognitive resources can be an advantage or a disadvantage, depending on how those resources might otherwise be

used. To the extent that cognitive resources can be devoted to controlling the self-presentation, say by planning and monitoring one's own actions and the feedback from the audience, then greater resources yield better performance. To the extent that available cognitive resources might actually interfere with task performance because individuals are filled with self-conscious doubts about a public appearance, then the addition of an otherwise neutral distracting task actually can improve performance.

Configuring Self-Presentations: Drawing from Self, Audience, and Situation

Self-presentation is an *activity* that is shaped by a combination of personality, situational, and audience factors (Schlenker, 1985; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). It reflects the *transaction* between self and audience in a particular social context. It is not purely an expression of self, purely a role-played response to situational pressures, or purely conformity to the identity expectations of salient others. It is a combination and reflection of all of these. Self-presentations incorporate features of the actor's self-concept, personality style, salient social roles, and beliefs about their audience's preferences.

Although much of the incorporated information may be relatively truthful, there also may be exaggerations or distortions of personal experiences and qualities, and even fabrications. From mass media, books, and personal experience, people acquire extensive knowledge of a variety of prototypical people who are exemplars of particular identity types (e.g., Clint Eastwood, the tough, principled loner; Bill Clinton, the gregarious, empathetic leader), personality styles (e.g., extraversion versus introversion), and social roles (e.g., man or woman, banker or hairdresser). Even if people do not usually see themselves as having a specific set of attributes, they can readily imagine exemplars and social scripts for how particular types of people should behave. They can then try to portray specific identities, regardless of whether these are usually part of their self-conception and public identity. In other words, people have knowledge of a vast array of identity types and

roles and can piece together self-presentations that comprise a mix of information from their self-conceptions, including prior personal experiences, and their knowledge of identity types and roles that may not usually be included in their self-conceptions. In social situations, people draw from or sample this knowledge to construct their self-presentations to others.

The aspects of self that become accessible in memory and therefore are more likely to be expressed in self-presentations seem to be determined by the relevance and importance of the knowledge, given the actors' goals, the particular audience, and the nature of the situation (see Jones, 1990; Schlenker, 1986). Features of self that are usually more important to the actor's identity, that have been recently activated (e.g., expressed in recent self-presentations), that are associated with current interpersonal goals, and that seem to be relevant to the situation or audience (e.g., because they correspond to situational norms or audience preferences) are more likely to become salient and accessible (e.g., Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1986; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Further, people reconstruct past experiences from their memories by organizing stories and remembering (even making up) details that are compatible with their current goals and experiences (Baumeister & Newman, 1994; J. D. Brown, 1998; Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Singer & Salovey, 1993). Thus information about self is brought to mind and hence becomes available for self-presentations, based not just on the content of the self-concept but on the actors' social goals, salient audience, and social situation.

Constructing a Desired Identity

Researchers on the self have suggested two broad answers to the question, How do people want others to see them? One approach focuses on self-glorification: People want others to see them as having positive, socially desirable qualities. The idea that people want to view themselves positively and prefer others to share this opinion is a fundamental motivational principle in theories of self that emphasize self-esteem enhancement (e.g., J. D. Brown, 1998; Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, & Baldwin, 1999; Leary &

Baumeister, 2000). A second approach focuses on self-consistency: People want others to see them in ways that will confirm how they see themselves. Swann (1983; Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992) argued that people have a cognitive need for order and predictability, which is fulfilled by receiving feedback that confirms important self-beliefs. He proposed that people try to verify their existing self-conceptions, including by presenting themselves in ways that increase the likelihood of receiving self-verifying feedback.

These approaches have been highly productive and have generated volumes of research. Each approach focuses on a specific motive and assumes that the motive applies broadly. Data that support the opposite motive are explained by adding qualifiers, as when (1) self-esteem advocates suggest that consistency is sometimes obtained because it is self-esteem deflating to make claims that are contradicted by salient information, or (2) self-consistency advocates suggest that self-enhancement is sometimes obtained because the relevant belief is not held with sufficient certainty to motivate a verification process. In either case, though, theoretical attention is focused on the individual and his or her self-concept and self-evaluation.

Alternatively, self-presentations can be seen as goal-directed activities that occur in a social context consisting of an actor, an audience, and a social situation (Schlenker, 1985; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). When self-presentation is viewed as a transaction rather than an expression of self, theoretical attention shifts from the individual to the relationship between actor and audience. What is desirable in this social context depends on factors relevant to the actor (e.g., self-concept, goals), the audience (e.g., perceived preferences, power to mediate valued outcomes), and the situation (e.g., relevant social roles, opportunities for valued outcomes).

According to this transactional view, two features define the desirability of a self-presentation for the individual. First, a desirable self-presentation is perceived as *beneficial* in that the actor regards it as facilitating his or her goals and values relative to alternative claims. Second, it is perceived as *believable*, that is, it should be regarded as a reasonably accurate construal of the salient evidence that can be credibly presented to the audience. Desirable self-presentations thus reflect the integration of what people would like to be and think they can be in a given social context (Schlenker, 1985). Research (see Schlenker & Weigold, 1989) is consistent with the proposition that a particular self-presentation is more likely to occur when factors (1) increase the expected beneficial consequences if the self-presentation is believed (e.g., it becomes more rewarding to present oneself consistently with an employer's preferences, such as immediately before promotions decisions), (2) decrease the expected detrimental consequences if the self-presentation is disbelieved or backfires (e.g., it becomes less embarrassing or punitive even if a self-presentation is disbelieved by the audience), and (3) increase the perceived likelihood that the audience will believe the self-presentation (e.g., the audience is seen as supportive and accepting of the actor's claims).

Beneficial Self-Presentations

The self-presentation literature provides strong support for the general principle that people's self-presentations shift in ways that improve the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes (see Baumeister, 1982; Jones & Wortman, 1973; Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Rosenfeld et al., 1995; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989, 1992; Tedeschi, 1981; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). In his pioneering research on ingratiation, Jones (1964) showed that people's self-presentations are more likely to conform to the preferences of the target when actors are dependent on the target for desired outcomes. Furthermore, people will try to camouflage their strategic objectives by balancing self-serving information on the preferred dimensions with negative information on irrelevant dimensions, thus appearing more credible in their claims.

In organizational settings, self-presentation strategies are relatively routine components of job procurement and career advancement (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Gould & Penley, 1984; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Kacmar, Delery, & Ferris, 1992; Rosenfeld et al., 1995; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). During ac-

tual job interviews, the use of self-presentation tactics such as self-promotion and ingratiation predicted interviewers' evaluations of applicants and whether applicants later were invited for site visits (Stevens & Kristoff, 1995). Self-enhancing and ingratiatory communications enhance subordinates' performance appraisals by supervisors (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991; Wayne, Kacmar, & Ferris, 1995) and have been related to career success (Gould & Penley, 1984; Kacmar et al., 1992). However, seeming to be too self-absorbed and self-promoting can also backfire. Although displays of competence and accomplishment often work (e.g., Gould & Penley, 1984; Kacmar et al., 1992), they also have been shown to generate negative reactions in onlookers (Godfrey, Jones, & Lord, 1986; Schlenker & Leary, 1982a), particularly if the actor volunteers such information without a specific request from the audience (Holtgraves & Srull, 1989). Furthermore, Judge and Bretz (1994) found that career success was positively related to supervisor-focused tactics such as ingratiation and negatively related to job-focused tactics such as self-promotion. This suggests that it may be easier to try to increase the positive regard in which one is held by complimenting others than by single-mindedly promoting oneself, an idea that is consistent with Dale Carnegie's (1940) advice on how to win friends and influence people. Self-promotion may be especially likely to backfire when it is not fully matched by corresponding accomplishments and makes the actor appear to be self-absorbed to the detriment of others (Schlenker, Pontari, & Christopher, 2001). Even ingratiation can backfire if it is perceived as insincere and self-serving, as when people ingratiate to superiors but are harsh and nasty to subordinates (Vonk, 1998). It also can backfire and make an opponent less conciliatory if an ingratiator appears overly friendly and nice during tough negotiations (Baron, Fortin, Frei, Hauver, & Shack, 1990).

People claim desirable images both directly—through verbal and nonverbal activities that communicate information about their own attributes and accomplishments—and indirectly—by communicating information about the qualities and accomplishments of their associates and enemies (Cialdini, Finch, & DeNicholas, 1990). Cialdini and his colleagues found that people will bask in the reflected glory of the accomplishments of others, distance themselves from unattractive people, blast the accomplishments of rivals, and boost their evaluations of otherwise unattractive people with whom they are already associated. This indirect self-presentation takes advantage of the evaluative generalization that occurs when two concepts are linked in the minds of perceivers (Cialdini et al., 1990). By linking themselves to successful, admirable others, people thereby look better to others and feel better about themselves.

The association of self with others who are known for their accomplishments can boomerang, however, and make the actor look worse by comparison. Tesser's (1988) self-evaluation maintenance model indicates that boosting others does not occur if emphasizing the superior qualities of the other threatens people's own self-evaluation, as in cases in which the superior performance is by a close other (e.g., friend, sibling) on a dimension of high personal relevance. For example, if the other is psychologically close and performs well on a dimension that is irrelevant to the pretensions of the actor (e.g., the other is a great musician, whereas the actor prefers to be seen as an athlete and has no musical pretensions), the actor will bask in the reflected glory of the other's accomplishments. However, if the other is close and performs well on a dimension on which the actor also has pretensions (e.g., the actor also wants to be seen as a great musician), the comparison is threatening, and the actor will take steps to avoid it or harm the standing of the comparison other. Lockwood and Kunda (2000) similarly examined the impact of stellar role models known for their accomplishments. They found that when people compare themselves to relevant "star" models, they react positively if they think the role model's success is personally attainable and negatively if they think the role model's success is personally unattainable.

Beneficial images are ones that are perceived by the actor to facilitate goals; they are not necessarily socially desirable or positive images. Much of the time, people prefer to project socially desirable images because these are associated with valued

interpersonal goals. However, people will present themselves in socially undesirable or negative ways if doing so facilitates their goals. For example, people will present themselves as irrational and intimidating if they want to generate fear, or as weak and helpless if they want to be cared for by others (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980). In addition, people will be self-deprecating if (1) they believe that well-adjusted people will be assigned to perform an embarrassing task (Kowalski & Leary, 1990); (2) the audience seems to admire lower levels of competence (Zanna & Pack, 1975); (3) they think claims of competence will threaten the audience (Jones & Wortman, 1973); (4) they confront unrealistically high public expectations by others and want to lower them to levels that are more attainable (Baumeister, Hamilton, & Tice, 1985; Baumgardner & Brownlee, 1987; Gibson & Sachau, 2000), and (5) they want to coax competitors into underestimating them (Gibson & Sachau, 2000; Shepperd & Socherman, 1997). Thus many different types of self-presentations can be beneficial depending on the actor's goals, resources, audience, and social context.

Believable Self-Presentations

People cannot simply claim anything that might facilitate their goals, regardless of its accuracy. In any social group, general well-being depends on people being able to count on one another to do what they say they will do and to be what they claim to be. From the group's perspective, people who routinely lie, mislead others for personal profit, or exaggerate to the point at which they cannot fulfill the expectations that are created pose a threat to those who might otherwise need to depend on them. Untrustworthy individuals cannot be counted on for cooperative ventures. Social norms thus prescribe being reliable, sincere, and trustworthy. From the actors' perspective, failing to appear in these ways produces personal and interpersonal problems. Unbounded self-glorification, for example, can create the impression that the actor is narcissistically self-absorbed (perhaps to the detriment of others), can lead onlookers to conclude that the actor is deceitful or foolish, and can condemn the actor to failure if un-

realistically high public expectations are not fulfilled (Schlenker et al., 2001).

Self-presentations produce obligations for people to be what they say they are or risk personal and interpersonal sanctions (Goffman, 1959, 1967; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker et al., 2001). People prefer others whose claims are consistent with their accomplishments; in general, the greater the discrepancy between claims and accomplishments, the less the actor is liked (Schlenker & Leary, 1982a). Appreciating this relationship, people will try to match their self-presentations to publicly known information about them (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Schlenker, 1975). If contradictory information can be hidden from public view, people tend to be self-enhancing, but if contradictory information has or will become public knowledge, people shift their self-presentations to be consistent with the information (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Schlenker, 1975). Although people routinely exaggerate their skills, accomplishments, and past salaries on job applications, they are much less likely to do so if it could be readily verified by previous employers (Cascio, 1975).

When negative information is publicly known, people try to compensate for it by elevating their self-presentations on other dimensions (Baumeister & Jones, 1978). People usually present themselves in ways that they expect to be able to substantiate to onlookers, and they will go so far as to be self-deprecating or even fail in order to lower public expectations that they regard as too high (Baumeister, Hamilton, & Tice, 1985; Baumgardner & Brownlee, 1987) and avoid the appearance of inconsistency.

Desired Self-Presentations: Synopsis

The desirability of a particular image of self is not a constant, fixed by properties of the self-concept. Desirability is multiply determined by factors in the social context, including not only the actor's preferences but also the audience's preferences and the roles appropriate in the social situation. Depending on who the audience is (e.g., Are they significant by virtue of being powerful or attractive?) and what they know (e.g., Are they aware of potentially contradictory information?), different images of self become

more or less desirable to the actor. Desirability thus reflects information that is beneficial but believable.

The Public Becomes Private

Self-presentations that are initiated and guided by their anticipated impact on others can also produce a change in the private self. Symbolic interactionists such as Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902) emphasized the interplay between the public and private sides of self. They proposed that the self is constructed through social interaction, as people come to view themselves through the roles they play and the reactions of others to them. Research shows that people's strategic self-presentations can influence how they privately characterize themselves later. People will shift their global self-evaluations (Gergen, 1965; Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986) and the specific contents of their self-beliefs (McKillop, Berzonsky, & Schlenker, 1992; Schlenker, Dlugolecki, & Doherty, 1994; Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990; Tice, 1992) in the direction of their public behavior. Changes produced by public self-presentations carry over to new settings with different audiences, as people who portray a particular role will continue to behave consistently with that role even after they leave the situation in which it was initially induced (Schlenker et al., 1994; Tice, 1992).

Public self-presentations are most likely to generate changes in private self-beliefs when they occur in contexts that make the public images appear to be representative of self. The appearance of representativeness is produced when people freely choose to engage in the self-presentation rather than being required to do so or are free to draw on their own personal experiences during the performance rather than being forced to use nonpersonal examples (Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986; Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990; Tice, 1992). Representativeness also is produced by public commitment to the role. Self-presentations that carry a public commitment, such as ones that are performed publicly or are expected to be performed publicly, produce more change in self-beliefs than ones that are privately performed with no public ramifications (Schlenker et al., 1994; Tice, 1992).

Simply rehearsing a role privately for an upcoming interview produces a change in self-beliefs if people anticipate that they will actually perform the role shortly, but it produces no change if people believe that they will not have to go through with the interview because it was canceled (Schlenker et al., 1994). People also regard their self-presentations as more representative if they can be easily assimilated into existing self-schemas. If self-presentations are greatly discrepant from clear prior self-beliefs, people reject them as "not me" and do not internalize them. However, if self-presentations are only moderately discrepant from clear prior self-beliefs or if prior self-beliefs are weak, people will shift their private self-beliefs to bring them in line with their public performances (Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990). Finally, audience feedback can convince people that their self-presentations are representative. People are more likely to bring their beliefs in line with self-presentations that produce approval and acceptance from others (Gergen, 1965). Such audience acceptance helps substantiate the new view of self.

From a practical perspective, public performances are an important vehicle for self-concept change. Act the part and it becomes incorporated into the self-concept, provided the performance appears to be representative and the actor comes to regard the image as personally beneficial.

Audiences for the Performance

Social behavior takes place in the context of real or imagined audiences whose existence and reactions (real or anticipated) influence actors' thoughts, feelings, and conduct. Symbolic interactionists (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934) proposed that self-regulation is not a personal or private matter but must take into account an audience. Mead (1934) went so far as to argue that thought itself is social in character and takes the form of an inner dialogue, in which self alternates between the roles of speaker and audience, and not a monologue. Self-regulation involves taking the role of others, anticipating their likely reactions to one's own possible actions, and selecting one's conduct accordingly. The ability to put oneself in the place of others and imagine how they are likely to

interpret and respond to information is the basis for effective communication (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; E. T. Higgins, 1992).

Most research on self-presentation has examined people's behavior in the presence of real others, whose qualities are varied to make them seem more or less powerful, attractive, and expert (see Baumeister, 1982; Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985; Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Social impact theory (Nowak, Szamrej, & Latané, 1990) indicates that the impact of an audience on an individual's thoughts, feelings, and conduct is a function of the audience's significance, size, and psychological immediacy. Audiences create greater impact when they are more powerful and attractive, have a greater number of members, and are psychologically proximal rather than distant. Consistent with these factors, people's self-presentations tend to conform to the expectations and preferences of audiences who are more significant (e.g., attractive, powerful), have more members, and are either present or about to be encountered (see Baumeister, 1982; Jones & Wortman, 1973; Leary, 1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). Such audiences provide actors with opportunities to obtain desired outcomes, such as approval, respect, social validation, and material rewards, and to avoid their undesired opposites. Audiences thus can influence actors' self-presentations by shifting the reward–cost ratios that are associated with particular self-descriptions.

Many researchers think of self-presentation primarily in the context of immediate real audiences, situations in which people have something to gain (or avoid) by creating desired impressions. However, audiences can influence self-presentations in at least two other ways: as targets of communication and as sources of information that cue or prime desired identities (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992).

In order to communicate, people must put themselves in the place of others, take into account the others' knowledge and value systems, and package information using ideas, examples, and evidence that are comprehensible to those others. People change their verbal and nonverbal communications to take into account the particular characteristics of the audience (DePaulo, 1992; Hardin & Higgins, 1996; E. T. Higgins, 1992). For instance, they talk differently to adults than to children or to those who have backgrounds similar to or different from themselves (DePaulo, 1992). People also tune their messages to create different impacts on different audiences, as when they confront several audiences simultaneously and embed information in their communications that can be decoded accurately by one but not another (Fleming, Darley, Hilton, & Kojetin, 1990). E. T. Higgins (1992) described how people's communications create a shared reality that is sometimes different from the actual reality that was the basis for the messages. For example, people shift their descriptions of the behaviors of an individual depending on whether they are talking to someone who likes or dislikes that individual. These descriptions then have a greater impact on their memory of that individual than the original information itself has. Thus people's conceptions of reality are shaped by a social validation process. People's descriptions of self and events are influenced by the knowledge and preferences of the audience, and these descriptions, rather than the actual event itself, become reality (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; E. T. Higgins, 1992). Indeed, people's self-presentations, which reflect in part exaggerations and omissions designed to create a particular impression on others, can carry over to new situations and become internalized as part of the self-concept (Schlenker et al., 1994; Tice, 1992).

Audiences also can prime or activate relevant personal goals and identity images, which then guide people's subsequent self-presentations. For instance, seeing an attractive member of the opposite sex may bring to mind a romantic-quest script and a set of roles that the actor associates with impressing potential dates. Different audiences will trigger different goals and relevant identity images. Further, the audience does not even have to be present for such effects to occur. People often bring to mind imagined audiences who can serve as significant positive or negative reference groups for conduct. For instance, a soldier during World War II may have imagined how John Wayne would act, and thereby activated a

script for what should be done, how it should be done, and how well it should be done. Or, as Christmas approaches, children imagine the types of behaviors that will be approved or disapproved by Santa. Such imagined exemplars provide relevant goals, scripts, and evaluative standards for conduct.

Research has demonstrated the power of imagined audiences to influence people's behavior. Doherty, Van Wegenen, and Schlenker (1991) asked people to visualize a variety of stimuli, such as bright red apples and balls of cotton, supposedly so that the physiological correlates of mental imagery could be assessed. During this task, they imagined either a parent, a best friend, or a romantic partner. Later, in the context of a different task, they provided self-descriptions. Participants rated themselves as less independent (e.g., more obedient, cooperative, respectful) and as less sexual (e.g., sexy, passionate) after they had previously imagined a parent than a close peer. As these results illustrate, an audience does not even have to be present for it to shape how people think about and present themselves. As William James (1890) noted, people seem to have as many social selves as there are audiences they encounter. By making a particular audience salient, the relevant facet of self becomes salient, too.

Baldwin (1992) proposed that people store information about themselves and others in relationship schemas. These schemas contain three components: a self-schema, a significant-other schema, and a script pertaining to expected patterns of behavior in this relationship. The components are seen as structurally associated in memory, so that priming one element can activate others. Baldwin showed that priming particular audiences changes people's evaluative orientation. Baldwin and Holmes (1987) showed that women evaluated a sexually permissive piece of fiction more negatively after they visualized a parent, who might be expected to disapprove, than a friend. Baldwin, Carrell, and Lopez (1990) asked students to evaluate themselves or their ideas after unconscious exposure to pictures of approving or disapproving others. Evaluations were more negative after exposure to disapproving others. Priming salient audiences also can change people's current inter-

action patterns. Chen and Anderson (1999) found that aspects of past relationships with significant individuals can reemerge in present relationships with other people if the prior schemas are activated in memory.

Inner and Outer Self-Presentation Orientations

Self-presentations sometimes appear to be guided largely by pressures from audiences and situations and at other times largely by internal values and beliefs. This distinction between inner and outer orientations has been frequently discussed in the self-presentation literature as both an individual difference variable and a situational variable (Carver & Scheier, 1985; Cheek, 1989; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Hogan & Cheek, 1983). More broadly, the inner–outer metaphor runs through writings in psychology, sociology, and philosophy (Hogan & Cheek, 1983). Hogan and Cheek proposed that the dimensions of inner versus outer orientation are relatively independent, such that both orientations can be salient simultaneously (e.g., the individual who is aware of both public pressures and private principles and tries to work out some resolution when there is a conflict), that one can be salient while the other is not, or that neither might be salient (e.g., the individual who is indifferent to immediate others but also does not have a clear set of internal principles as guides for conduct in the situation). Data are consistent with the idea that the dimensions are positively correlated yet distinct (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1985; Cheek, 1989; Hogan & Cheek, 1983).

Analyses of individual differences in self-presentation have focused largely on variables that reflect the distinction between inner versus outer orientations. Personality measures of self-monitoring (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; M. Snyder, 1987), private versus public self-consciousness (Carver & Scheier, 1985), personal and social identity (Cheek, 1989; Hogan & Cheek, 1983), and the need for social approval (Paulhus, 1991) all assess aspects of differences in inner and outer orientations. Despite their common emphasis, the measures do differ. The Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1979) was designed to assess differences in how much attention is focused on the private and public sides of self. The As-

pects of Identity Scale (Cheek, 1989) was designed to assess the importance people attach to the personal and social sides of their identity. The Need for Approval Scale (see Paulhus, 1991) assesses people's willingness to distort information about themselves in order to make a positive impression on others and to feel good about themselves. The Self-Monitoring Scale (M. Snyder, 1987) was designed to assess people's sensitivity to social cues regarding appropriate behavior and their willingness to engage in such behavior. More recently, Gangestad and Snyder (2000) suggested that high self-monitors seem to be motivated to enhance their social status. Their chameleon-like behavior to different audiences may primarily reflect status enhancement strategies of impression management. Further, high self-monitors do not seem to display the "close attention and responsiveness to other people" that was originally a core component of the concept (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, p. 545). However, they are high on expressive control and nonverbal decoding skills, which contribute to their strong acting skills.

At one time, researchers entertained the idea that people who were inner oriented, such as those low in self-monitoring or high in private self-consciousness, were able to tune out social pressures, remain oblivious to audience expectations, and be guided exclusively by inner values and beliefs (Buss & Briggs, 1984; Carver & Scheier, 1985; M. Snyder, 1987). Increasingly, though, researchers are recognizing the power of audiences to shape the self-presentations of those who are inner oriented. In their recent analysis of self-monitoring, Gangestad and Snyder (2000) questioned the original view that low self-monitors are oblivious to social pressure and raised the possibility that low self-monitors are concerned about their "reputations of being genuine and sincere people who act on their beliefs" (p. 547).

Schlenker and Weigold (1990) showed that privately self-conscious people are concerned with their reputations to audiences. Privately self-conscious people describe themselves as independent, autonomous, and somewhat unique, whereas publicly self-conscious people describe themselves as being cooperative team players who are able to get along well. Schlenker and Weigold found that both publicly and privately self-conscious people changed their publicly expressed beliefs based on audience feedback, but for different reasons. Publicly self-conscious people conformed to the expectations of their partners—they presented themselves consistently with the type of identity the partners thought they should have. Privately self-conscious people, however, presented themselves in ways that were designed to convey an image of autonomy to the audience. They shifted their behavior just as much as publicly self-conscious participants, but for a different purpose. These results indicate that inner and outer orientations, at least as represented by private and public self-consciousness, do not seem to be distinguished by whether self-presentations are influenced by audiences but rather by how they are influenced. People who are publicly self-conscious look to audiences to tell them who to be; they then present themselves in these ways. In contrast, privately self-conscious people look to audiences to tell them if they are coming across as they want to; they present themselves in ways that make them appear autonomous and change their behavior if feedback suggests they are not effectively creating that impression.

Focusing on Immediate Audiences: Self-Presentation Problems

Many problems in social life arise from a single-minded focus on gaining the approval and acceptance of immediate audiences. Outer orientations are associated with social trepidations. Public self-consciousness, for example, is positively related to social anxiety, shyness, and fear of negative evaluation (Schlenker & Weigold, 1990) and produces conformity designed to please immediate audiences (Carver & Scheier, 1985). When people look to immediate audiences to help them define who they should be, how they should look, and what they should do, they are in danger of acting in ways that compromise their integrity and may even endanger their health.

In their analysis of self-presentational hazards, Leary, Tchividjian, and Kraxberger (1994) reviewed literature indicating that self-presentational concerns are related to numerous health problems, including HIV infection, skin cancer, eating disorders, alco-

hol and drug abuse, accidental death, and even acne. For example, concerns about how one might appear to a partner reduce condom use and increase the likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. The desire to cultivate the appearance of being bronzed and beautiful causes people to tan excessively and risk skin cancer and to overuse makeup and risk acne. Eating disorders are due in part to concerns about body appearance. Alcohol and drug use are related to peer pressure and acceptance, and accidents are often caused by people showing off to friends in order to be seen as brave, adventuresome, and reckless. Despite the potential hazards of drinking from a stranger's water bottle, people will do so if they previously experienced a threat to their social image and were challenged by the stranger (Martin & Leary, 1999). Thus, attempts to look good to immediate audiences can increase health risk.

It is worth noting that these problems are not really self-presentation problems; they are outer orientation problems. They arise because people are focused on gaining the approval and acceptance of immediate others and will do whatever is necessary, including often ignoring their own principles and good judgment, in order to impress the immediate audience. Everyone cares about acceptance and approval. Not everyone, though, needs approval from whatever audience happens to be around nor needs approval to the point at which personal principles are abandoned. Hogan and Cheek (1983) proposed that maturity involves being able to recognize and deal with both inner (e.g., personal principles) and outer concerns (e.g., the expectations and preferences of others). To be oriented exclusively toward outer concerns is to allow others to dictate one's life. Conversely, to be oriented exclusively toward inner concerns often amounts to being egocentric, eccentric, and unable to deal effectively with others (Hogan & Cheek, 1983). Balancing inner and outer concerns evidences more mature social functioning.

How Effectively Can People Control Their Self-Presentations?

As noted earlier, people have extensive knowledge about different identity types and roles and can draw from this information even if they do not normally view themselves as having the particular set of personal attributes. How effectively are people able to portray someone they are not? Are most people, like actors on a stage, able to step into new roles and perform them competently, at least enough to convince an audience?

People are able to express attitudes and emotions, describe prior personal experiences, play social roles, and fulfill audience expectations, even when these are inconsistent with their own self-conceptions, feelings, and personal experiences. And they can do it convincingly through both their verbal and nonverbal communications. Studies show that when people are asked to play a role, such as being an introvert or extravert, they are able to convince onlookers that they actually have those characteristics, regardless of whether they really do (Lippa, 1976; Pontari & Schlenker, 2000; Toris & DePaulo, 1984). In her review of the literature on self-presentation and nonverbal behavior, DePaulo (1992) concluded that,

> Virtually every study . . . [of nonverbal posing skill] has shown that people can successfully make clear to others, using only nonverbal cues, the internal state that they are actually experiencing and that they can also convey to others the impression that they are experiencing a particular internal state when in fact they are not. . . . Furthermore, when people are deliberately trying to convey an impression of a state that they are not really experiencing, their nonverbal behaviors convey that state to others even more clearly and effectively than when they really are experiencing the state but are not trying purposefully to communicate it to others." (p. 219)

DePaulo's (1992) review indicates that when people fake personality dispositions and other personal information, they present an exaggerated version of what such an individual would actually do. For example, extraverts speak faster than introverts, so when faking extraversion, people speak even more rapidly than an actual extravert would. The resulting caricature is usually convincing to onlookers.

In general, onlookers' skill at detecting deception is poor and exceeds chance by only a slight amount (DePaulo, 1992, 1994;

DePaulo, Stone, & Lassiter, 1985; Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991). Even in close relationships such as marriage, unless trust has been shaken in some other way, partners are poor at detecting when they are being deceived (McCormack & Levine, 1990). Yet deception can be detected, often under conditions that are most disadvantageous for the deceiver. DePaulo, LeMay, and Epstein (1991) describe a motivational impairment effect in which people's attempts to deceive are most likely to go awry on those occasions when deception is most beneficial. People who are highly motivated to get away with deception are also most likely to be seen as deceptive by onlookers *if* they also doubt their ability to convince the audience (DePaulo, 1992; DePaulo et al., 1991). Under these conditions, deceivers are more likely to experience social anxiety, and behavioral signs of anxiety are likely to tip off observers. People who are confident of their social skills, however, do not seem to exhibit motivational impairment (DePaulo, 1992; DePaulo et al., 1991).

There are virtually no data on how long people can successfully maintain a deception about themselves. It is one thing to fake information for an hour and another to try to keep it up for days or longer. People may have difficulty maintaining long-term deceptions in part because potentially contradictory information needs to be monitored and suppressed, and, over time, contradictions may slip through as the actors' attention is focused elsewhere. Furthermore, faking may be too effortful and unenjoyable to maintain for long periods. For example, introverts prefer more introspective activities and may not enjoy "faking" being outgoing, even if they can get away with it for limited periods of time.

Reasons for Deceptive Effectiveness

People's effectiveness at convincing others of the genuineness of their self-presentations stems from both actors' skills and audiences' predilections. On the actors' side of the equation, skills at deception are socialized and rewarded in everyday life. Although parents condemn deceit in principle, children are socialized to suppress some feelings and be deceptive about others as part of learning how to be a polite, well-mannered individual. For example, children learn to smile and act happy even when they receive an unwelcome present or to compliment Aunt Sue's new hairstyle even though they think it is hideous. The ability to deceive may be an important component of social power and social acceptance. Keating and Heltman (1994) found that people who are rated as more dominant by peers also were better at deception, and this was true for both children and adult men (but not for women). Furthermore, this effect held over and above communication skill generally; more dominant individuals seemed to be uniquely talented in their ability to disguise the truth in ways not dependent only on their overall communication ability. Similarly, people who score high in Machiavellianism, who are highly effective at bargaining and negotiation, are also effective liars who appear honest even while manipulating others, especially when the stakes are high (Schlenker, 1980; Wilson, Near, & Miller, 1996). Yet those high in Machiavellianism are not socially effective on all dimensions, because their selfish, manipulative style can create problems in long-term relationships (Wilson et al., 1996), and they exhibit such signs of psychopathy as narcissism, anxiety, and lack of remorse (McHoskey, Worzel, & Szyarto, 1998).

DePaulo and her colleagues (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996; Kashy & DePaulo, 1996) found that people lie relatively frequently during their everyday interactions (e.g., college students remembered telling about two lies per day). Most of these lies were self-centered and designed to advance or protect personal interests. However, many of the lies were other-centered in that they were designed to help or protect others, and people said they did not regard their lies as serious, nor did they worry about being caught (DePaulo et al., 1996). Further, people who tell more lies tend to be more sociable and more concerned with self-presentation, again suggesting that lying often serves to improve social functioning (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996). Lies of omission and commission are used to sooth the feelings of those we like when the truth might otherwise hurt (DePaulo & Bell, 1996). This is one reason that people's impressions of how others view them are usually self-flattering versions of how those

others actually do view them. The paradox is that deceit, which is condemnable in principle, plays an important role in maintaining harmony and soothing tensions in everyday life.

On the audience's side of the equation, audiences usually give actors the benefit of the doubt and assume that their self-presentations are authentic. This tendency is consistent with the correspondence bias and with the operation of social norms favoring considerateness. The correspondence bias (Jones, 1990) describes the tendency of people to attribute the behaviors of others to corresponding internal states—for example, if others act extraverted, it is because they are extraverted. The correspondence bias is even more pronounced when perceivers are cognitively busy rather than able to focus their full attention on the actor's behavior (Gilbert, Krull, & Pelham, 1988). The more hectic the occasion, the more likely audiences are to accept the self-presentations of others at face value. Goffman (1959) noted that people are predisposed to honor the claims of others and assume truthfulness, at least publicly. Doing so makes interactions flow more smoothly and reduces the tension associated with visible suspicion. Even when people detect contradictory information, they often let it slide unless it is important to their goals during interaction.

When Are People More Effective at Self-Presentation?

People differ in their self-presentation skills, including their expressiveness (DePaulo, 1992) and acting ability (M. Snyder, 1987). Going beyond these interpersonal abilities, though, people's interpersonal orientations can have a pronounced impact on how effective they are at self-presentation. Self-presentations seem to be effective when people are motivated to make a desired impression on an audience and are relatively confident they will be able to do so. This combination—the motivation to impress and self-presentation confidence—seems to provide the optimal environment for effectively communicating to others and influencing them to form the preferred impression. If either component is lacking, as when the motivation to impress the audi-

ence is low or self-presentation doubts are high, self-presentation effectiveness seems to suffer (see Schlenker et al., 1996).

One extreme is marked by cases in which people are highly motivated to impress an audience and have doubts about their ability to do so. These conditions produce high social anxiety (Leary, 1983; Leary & Kowalski, 1995; Schlenker & Leary, 1982b, 1985). Social anxiety is associated with negative affect, negative self-preoccupation, the appearance of nervousness, physical and psychological withdrawal from the situation, and self-protective presentational strategies (e.g., minimal social participation, low self-disclosure, innocuous social behaviors such as smiling and nodding). The result is an inferior performance that usually fails to make a good impression.

The other extreme is marked by cases in which the motivation to create a desired impression on an immediate audience is very low, which can occur when the audience is seen as insignificant (e.g., a servant) or the actor is overly confident that the audience has already formed the desired impression and will not change it (e.g., a spouse). These conditions produce suboptimal monitoring of self-presentation activities and audience feedback (see Schlenker et al., 1996). For example, the actor may misread the situation, fail to notice negative audience feedback, be inconsistent in matching verbal and nonverbal activities, and seem preoccupied with other goals. Marriage counselors are often confronted with complaints that, "My spouse is no longer the person I married." Seemingly secure in the other's regard, one has allowed one's own appearance and manner to deviate dramatically from the desirable behavior once exhibited during courtship. Similarly, coaches of athletic teams often warn their players about overconfidence lest they take a game for granted and fail to monitor and control their efforts effectively.

In between these extremes is the optimal situation, in which people assign reasonably high priority to how the immediate audience regards them and feel confident that they can create the desired impression. Under these conditions, people seem most effective in marshaling their verbal and nonverbal activities to create the impression they desire and can do so regardless of

whether that impression is an accurate or deceptive portrayal of self (Schlenker et al., 1996).

Protecting Identity: Self-Presentations in Predicaments

Despite their best intentions, people sometimes find themselves in predicaments that threaten their desired identities. Problems may arise because of accidents, mistakes, or some other unintended faux pas, because of failures to accomplish important tasks, or because of intentional behavior that comes to the attention of audiences and jeopardizes desired appearances, as in cases in which people appear to lie or cheat. When these predicament-creating events occur, people engage in remedial activities designed to protect their identities (see Leary, 1995; Rosenfeld et al., 1995; Schlenker, 1980, 1982). These activities fall into three broad categories: accountability avoidance strategies, accounting strategies, and apology strategies (Schlenker, Weigold, & Doherty, 1991).

Accountability Avoidance Strategies

These strategies are designed to put off, avoid, or escape from tasks, situations, and audiences that threaten desired identities. People avoid tasks that produce embarrassment and will even sacrifice money to do so (B. R. Brown, 1970; Miller, 1996); they avoid social situations they expect will produce anxiety and prematurely leave those that elicit anxiety (Leary, 1995); and they conceal embarrassing or out-of-character information (Leary, 1995; Schlenker, 1980). These activities allow people to avoid or escape from an evaluative reckoning in which their behavior may be judged and found wanting by others.

The behaviors of people high in social anxiety illustrate common but pervasive avoidance strategies. Highly anxious people tend to have fewer social contacts and, when in social situations, tend to engage in behavior that avoids the evaluative spotlight (see Leary & Kowalski, 1995; Schlenker & Leary, 1985). When they are socially anxious, people initiate fewer conversations, speak less frequently, avoid eye contact, do not speak freely, and disclose less information about themselves; the information they do reveal is usually uncontroversial and undiagnostic.

Even when people can escape from immediate audiences, they still must account to themselves and deal with inner audiences. After predicaments, these inner audiences can be potentially harsh judges, sometimes even harsher than real audiences (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996), and self-focused attention becomes an unpleasant state that people try to terminate (Hull & Young, 1983). People can escape from aversive self-evaluation by turning to alcohol, drugs, physical exercise, meditation, television, shopping, and other activities that reduce self-consciousness (see Schlenker et al., 1991).

Actors also can try to escape accountability by denying the evaluators' legitimacy as judges. People may assert, "You have no right to judge me," and refuse to offer an explanation. They thereby try to disqualify the audience as someone to whom they might be accountable.

Accounting Strategies

When facing predicaments, people construct accounts that provide self-serving explanations. These accounts attempt to reconcile the event with the prescriptions for conduct that appear to have been violated. Accounts include (1) defenses of innocence, which assert that a violation did not occur (e.g., an accused murderer proclaims, "It was a suicide, not a murder") or that the actor was in no way involved with the violation, (2) excuses, which claim that the individual was not as responsible for the event as it might otherwise appear (e.g., claiming the consequences were unforeseeable or caused by factors beyond personal control), and (3) justifications, which claim that the event was not as negative as it might otherwise appear to be or was actually positive because the actor was working toward a valued, superordinate goal.

Accounts can be highly effective in accomplishing their objectives of minimizing the negative personal and interpersonal ramifications of predicaments (see Leary, 1995; Rosenfeld et al., 1995; Schlenker, 1980, 1982; Schlenker et al., 2001; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Weiner, Figueroa-Munoz,

& Kakihara, 1991). Snyder and Higgins (1988) reviewed an extensive literature showing that excuses can protect self-esteem, reduce negative affect and depression, lead to better task performance, and produce better physical health. Excuses and justifications also have been shown to reduce interpersonal condemnation, even for criminal acts, provided they appear to be sincere (see Rosenfeld et al., 1995; Schlenker et al., 2001).

However, excuses also have the potential to backfire and create problems for the actor (Higgins & Snyder, 1989; Schlenker et al., 2001). These problems can include appearing to be dishonest, self-absorbed to the detriment of others, and ineffectual at accomplishing appropriate tasks. Justifications can backfire, too, because they tend to be more confrontational than excuses (Gonzalez, Pederson, Manning, & Wetter, 1990). With excuses, actors acknowledge that the relevant norms and rules apply to them but simply plead diminished responsibility. With justifications, actors often assert that the norms and rules that might seem to apply are superseded by other, more important ones. An extreme example is the terrorist who asserts that placing a bomb in a shopping area is an act to promote freedom and justice, not to murder innocents.

Coverage of the extensive literature on accounts is beyond the scope of this chapter. Interested readers are referred elsewhere (McLaughlin, Cody, & Read, 1992; Rosenfeld et al., 1995; Schlenker, 1980, 1982; Schlenker et al., 1991, 2001; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Snyder, Higgins, & Stucky, 1983; Tedeschi & Riess, 1981).

Apologies

Apologies admit blameworthiness and regret. By accepting blame and expressing remorse, actors affirm the value of the rules that were violated and extend a promise of better future behavior (Goffman, 1971; Schlenker, 1980). Apologies thus split the self into two parts: a bad self that misbehaved and a good self that has learned a lesson and will behave more properly in the future. If the apology seems sincere and seems to fit the magnitude of the transgression (e.g., larger transgressions should be followed by greater remorse), the actor no longer seems to require rehabilitative punishment. After transgressions, people do offer apologies and, as the predicament increases in magnitude, include more apology elements, including statements of apologetic intent, expressions of remorse, offers of restitution, self-castigating comments, and requests for forgiveness (Schlenker & Darby, 1981).

If they seem sincere and fitted to the transgression, apologies produce less negative reactions toward transgressors, including more forgiveness, less blame, less punishment, less negative evaluations of the transgressors' character, less negative interpretations of the transgressors' motives, and a lower perceived likelihood that the offending behavior will be repeated (Darby & Schlenker, 1982, 1989; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989; Scher & Darley, 1997; Schwartz, Kane, Joseph, & Tedeschi, 1978; Weiner, Graham, Peter, & Zmuidinas, 1991).

Working Together to Maintain Desired Identities

People are not on their own when it comes to constructing and protecting desired identities. People often work as teams, as in the cases of a husband and wife who act in concert to project their family image, or the employer and employee who coordinate activities to create the appropriate business image (Goffman, 1959). When people perform as a team, their identities are linked. The self-presentation of one has direct implications for the identity of the other.

Even when not part of a team, people still help one another construct and protect their identities. Goffman (1967) described two interaction rules that he considered to be moral duties: the *rule of self-respect,* by which people have a duty to "be" who they claim to be and try to maintain that "face" if confronted by inconsistencies, and the *rule of considerateness,* by which people have the duty to respect the "faces" of others. People are expected to exhibit civility, politeness, and consideration for one another's identities. For example, people help one another maintain face, whether it is by seeming not to notice another person's faux pas or by making a witty remark that de-

flects the spotlight from someone else's embarrassing moment without making the embarrassed party look bad. Even kindergarten children seem to take into account the possible effects of their behavior on both their own faces and the faces of classmates (Hatch, 1987).

According to politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), when accounting for their own conduct, people must consider both their own face needs and the face needs of others, particularly anyone who might be harmed by the act or the explanation. Folkes (1982) found that when people reject another person, as when they refuse a request for a date, they usually provide excuses that emphasize a reason for the rejection that is not threatening for the recipient, such as by claiming illness or another commitment rather than a lack of interest. DePaulo and colleagues (1996) found that people often said they told lies in order to save another person's feelings.

Social norms prescribe politeness to others. There are often reasons to go beyond politeness, however, and to provide significant help to others by enhancing or protecting their identities. As shall be seen, such help can accomplish both selfish and selfless goals.

Bolstering the Identities of Others: Helping Self by Boosting Others

People often try to bolster the identities of others in order to accomplish their own personal, often selfish goals. Research on ingratiation showed that people will flatter others, agree with their opinions, imitate their behaviors, and do favors for them in order to make themselves liked and to receive such rewards as better performance appraisals from supervisors (Jones & Wortman, 1973; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991). People also will praise or help others with whom they are associated and thereby bask in the reflected glory of these desirable individuals (J. D. Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988; Cialdini et al., 1990; Tesser, 1988). In organizational settings, good citizenship is valued and rewarded, and people often present themselves as "good soldiers" who act selflessly on behalf of their organization. These self-presentations of being good organizational citizens seem to be motivated at least in part by self-serving, identity-boosting goals (Bolino, 1999).

Helping can also be a useful self-presentation strategy because of how it affects perceptions of the recipient's success. Gilbert and Silvera (1996) found that overhelping can be used to spoil another person's identity by causing onlookers to attribute the other's success to the help. They found that overhelping is most likely to occur when people believe their aid will be ineffective but that other onlookers will regard it as facilitative. Similarly, people who are in competition with others and who are concerned that they will lose will give performance advantages to those others, such as by playing facilitating background music while they and the others work on the task (Shepperd & Arkin, 1991). The others' success can thereby be discounted as due to the help rather than to superior relative ability.

As these lines of research show, people often receive identity support and assistance from others. However, what sometimes appears to be support is actually anything but helpful to the recipient, as in the case of overhelping as a means of spoiling identity or flattery designed to mislead another person into providing benefits. To the extent that identity support is guided primarily by the provider's selfish interpersonal goals, without regard to the welfare of the other, the recipient's benefits may be illusory, because the provider may not believe the compliments or be willing to provide more support in the future in the absence of personal profit.

Bolstering the Identities of Others: Social Support, Social Concern

The traditional view of impression management as selfish, often exploitative activity seems to have obscured its other, socially beneficial side. Using impression management to provide support for the desired identities of others is a valued, highly rewarding form of help. In everyday life, people will put in a good word for their friends to help them get the job or date they want, to help them feel good about their prospects when tackling challenging tasks, and to provide reassurance in the face of identity-threatening events. Social support that provides validation for desired identity images

has been related to the psychological well-being of the recipient, because it provides a buffer against stress, reduces negative affect and depression, and enhances positive affect and self-esteem (see J. D. Brown, 1998; Schlenker & Britt, 1999, 2001). Identity support is especially valuable in close relationships, in which people's satisfaction is directly related to the extent to which their partners see them in more positive, idealized ways than they see themselves (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996a, 1996b). The social support literature has focused on the recipient of the support, however, and not on how such support is provided.

Schlenker and Britt (1999, 2001) proposed that people will strategically enhance the identities of others by using beneficial impression management. Furthermore, these helpful activities are often guided by a concern for the others' social well-being, especially family and friends whose welfare is important. In support, Schlenker and Britt (1999, Experiment 1) found that participants strategically shifted their descriptions of same-sex friends in order to help their friends make a good impression on an attractive member of the opposite sex. If an attractive, opposite-sex individual preferred extraverted others as ideal dates, participants described their friends as highly extraverted, whereas if that other preferred introverted others as ideal dates, participants described their friends as introverted. Just as people's own self-presentations shift to conform to the role expectations of attractive others (Zanna & Pack, 1975), so do their descriptions of their friends. Further, if their friends found the opposite-sex individual to be quite unattractive, participants described their friends opposite to the preferences of the other—describing their friends as extraverted to the unattractive other who preferred introverts, and as introverted to the unattractive other who preferred extraverts—as if to assert, "My friend is not your type." They thus helped their friends avoid unwanted entanglements. These effects were obtained even though participants believed that their friends would not learn of their assistance. Thus people's descriptions of their friends seemed to be strategic and goal-oriented in character because they covaried with the apparent social interests of their friends in relation to the

audience and its preferences. Pontari and Schlenker (2001) extended these results and found that members of dating couples helped one another make a good impression on a third party who their partners thought was attractive, provided that third party was of the same sex as their partners. People were not helpful when describing their romantic partners to someone of the sex opposite to their partners'.

In two other studies, participants described same-sex friends to an evaluator who was supposedly testing their friends' cognitive abilities (Schlenker & Britt, 1999, 2001). They believed that their friends either had a high social need to make a good impression, because the friends supposedly would go through a face-to-face interview with the evaluator and receive feedback, or that they did not have a need to make a good impression, because the friends would not be interviewed or receive evaluative feedback. Participants described their friends as having greater cognitive ability when their friends had to go through the evaluative interview than when they did not. Further, beneficial impression management was greater by participants who scored higher on a personality measure of empathy and by those who expressed greater caring for their friends (Schlenker & Britt, 2001). These results show that strategic impression management, in the form of bolstering the desired identity images of a friend, covaries with the social needs of the friend and is greater under conditions in which people are more concerned with the friend's welfare (i.e., those more empathic and more caring toward the friend).

Research on beneficial impression management broadens our understanding of how people strategically control information in everyday life. Impression management is not motivated strictly by selfish, manipulative goals. Just like any other social activity, impression management can be guided by a variety of goals, some of which are socially beneficial. Indeed, people's own welfare depends in large measure on procuring the good will of others. To do so, people must imagine and anticipate the expectations and preferences of others and be willing to engage in mutually beneficial activities that take the predilections of audiences into account.

Conclusions

Self-presentation is a fundamental feature of social life. Symbolic interactionists noted that people cannot interact until they define who each one will be and what they are doing together (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Similarly, Abelson (1976, p. 42) proposed that "cognitively mediated social behavior depends on the occurrence of two processes: (a) the selection of a particular script to represent the given situation and (b) the taking of a participant role within that script." Taking a participant role means selecting a particular identity and then constructing and protecting that identity for audiences. Because people's identities are directly tied to the regard and treatment they receive in social life, people make those selections with care. They construct and protect desired identity images through self-presentation.

The self-presentation literature, as illustrated by the topics in this chapter, has remarkable breadth and depth. Self-presentation involves cognitively effortful, controlled activities, as well as unconscious, automatic behaviors. Self-presentation involves manipulative, selfish activities designed to exploit others, as well as socially beneficial behaviors that help others construct and protect their desired identities. Self-presentation involves deceptions about oneself, as well as sincere portrayals of how one thinks one really is. Self-presentation involves making a desired impression on an immediate audience, as well as conducting oneself in ways that are appreciated, at least in the mind's eye, by significant, imagined audiences (e.g., a deceased parent). Research on self-presentation has come a long way from the "early days" of the 1960s. In one of the first popular uses of the term in the social psychology literature, Jones (1964) described self-presentation as one of four ingratiation tactics, along with flattery, opinion conformity, and favor doing, that were illicit activities designed to increase one's liking by powerful others. This restricted use, which focused on the manipulative, illicit side of self-presentation and on the single-minded goal of being liked, is still the way some researchers think of the term. Today, though, research on self-presentation covers far more. Self-presentation has

emerged as an important and fundamental concept in social psychology.

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